

University of the District of Columbia
College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, B

Washington, D.C.

Telephone

RECEIVED
9/25/03
KT



9/21/03

Dear Madame/Sir:

As a Nutrition Outreach Activity for the University of the District of Columbia's Nutrition in the Life Cycle Class, the students were requested to review the Current Food Guide Pyramid and record their comments/recommendations for your information.

The students were eager to participate in this assessment process.

Please, accept the enclosed letter as a supportive statement for your work from our future nutrition educators and leaders.

Thank you in advance for a job well done!

Sincerely,

Jean L. Johnson, Ed, RD, LN
Assistant Professor Nutrition UDC.
JEAN L. JOHNSON

Johnson
1 OF 1

P.S. Please, forgive the "unprofessional" style but
am sending this out from my home w/ no electricity!
And only one sheet of UDC stationery! & one envelope!

Good old Isabelle!

Rebecca J. Salus

Washington, DC

RECEIVED
9/28/03
KT

September 17, 2003

Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team
USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1034
Alexandria, VA 22302

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing in response to the Federal Register notice vol. 68 no. 176 posted on September 11, 2003 regarding the solicitation of comments on the proposed revisions to the daily food intake patterns of Americans.

As a current student at the University of the District of Columbia studying nutrition, I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to review this public information and offer input as part of the reassessment process.

I am delighted to hear that the revised Food Guide Pyramid will include updates to the food intake patterns at a variety of energy levels. I think this decision reflects the recognition that people of different ages, activity levels and gender have different caloric and nutrient requirements to attain adequate health. Furthermore, I believe it is a necessary and prudent step towards addressing the obesity and overweight epidemic both children and adults our primarily sedentary nation is currently facing.

I would like to express my concern about several items I feel are important to the general health of Americans that I do not see represented on the existing Food Guide Pyramid. Listed below are several items I believe will assist Americans in using the Food Guide Pyramid to follow the established dietary guidelines.

- **Water** – I understand that since water has no calories, daily intake requirements cannot be set. However, the importance of consuming adequate amounts of water to health has been well established. If not part of the Food Guide Pyramid, perhaps a "quick tip" box adjacent to the Food Guide Pyramid can be established. It can contain the most important dietary guidelines once they are revised. Water may be represented by the tip: "drink plenty of water daily".
- **Trans fatty acids** – The September 2003 issue of the Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter reported that by January 6, 2006, the Nutrition Facts label would report a food's level of trans fatty acids. Although the Nutrition Facts label and the Food Guide Pyramid have different purposes, I think that this information is pertinent to the general health of Americans. Due to the nature of trans fatty acids to raise LDL cholesterol levels and suppress HDL cholesterol levels, I believe representation of trans fatty acids on the Food Guide Pyramid is warranted. My suggestion is for the Pyramid tip, to list the following: fats (especially trans fats and saturated fats), oils and sweets. The "quick tip" box I mentioned earlier could also contain a tip to "limit the amount of saturated fat and trans fat to 10% of total calories".
- **Caloric requirements** – Since new caloric requirements have been determined for various activity levels, ages and genders. This new information should be summarized and represented in a table located adjacent to the food guide pyramid.
- **Other potential tips for the "quick tip box"**
 - Be active every day

Salus
1 OF 2

September 17, 2003

- Eat within your energy level
- Limit foods high in sugar
- Other suggestions
 - Don't display the servings within a range on the Food Guide Pyramid. As a consumer, I read "6-11 servings of bread" and I may believe that when I eat a sandwich with 2 slices of bread, I am consuming 1-2 servings and I may be under the impression I can consume up to 11 servings. This misconception may cause me to consume more calories than I should for my energy level. Based on the proposed food intake patterns, it should be easy for consumers to identify their energy level and know how many servings they need by looking at the Pyramid. Displaying a range for serving sizes will cause the consumer to believe that their needs are anywhere within the range rather than within a narrower range designed specifically for their age, gender and activity level.
 - Always offer a place to go "for more information". If there is one useful lesson I have learned from my experiences with information architecture, it is to avoid "information overload", place the important information first, keep it clear and concise, and always send users to a place where they can get the more information if they are not satisfied with what you have provided. Of course, in this information age, this usually means a website. The URL should also be short, clear, meaningful and easy to remember.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my comments. I look forward to reviewing the graphic presentation as well as consumer messages and providing any feedback I may have.

Sincerely,

Rebecca J. Salus

Rebecca J. Salus
Nutrition Student, University of the District of Columbia

*Salus
20P2*

United States
Department of Agriculture

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9/17/03
KS

September 17, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

The Food Guide Pyramid has consistently been a successful tool for steering Americans in the right direction for their daily food choices. The pyramid helps individuals understand the importance of variety in the diet in order to maintain a balanced, healthy lifestyle. However, over the last decade a lot has changed. Now, with obesity practically an epidemic in the American society and heart disease as one of the nation's number one deaths, food and diet are huge implications of an individual's lifespan.

Many of the problems with Americans' diets are not because of the pyramid, but perhaps, some modifications could be made to make choosing the "right" choices even easier. For instance, when looking at the bread, cereal, pasta, rice group, there should be more emphasis on whole grains and high fiber foods. This could possibly help those individuals choosing foods made from refined or white flours only. In addition, there should be more detail in the protein and fat section of the pyramid explaining the importance of omega-3 fats in fish, certain oils, or certain nuts and outlining how much should be eaten weekly. In the vegetable section, maybe it would be a good idea to emphasize the importance of green leafy vegetables because of their powerfully healthy properties. Also, in the pyramid designed for people over 70 years in age, there was a small flag at the top indicated the recommended vitamins and minerals as well as a daily requirement of more than 8 glasses of water daily noted at the base of the pyramid. Both of these properties should be incorporated into the standard pyramid as a way to develop these habits early on for their preventative qualities.

These slight modifications may help the American society make even better choices, establishing better nutrition as well as having the control to prevent obesity and disease.

Sincerely,

BS per 1/1/03

Brooke Schechtman

Schechtman
10F1

RECEIVED
9/15/03

September 15, 2003

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Denise Tyner. I am a freshman at the University of the District of Columbia, majoring in Food Science and Nutrition. I think that the food guide pyramid is a wonderful tool to use for us as aspiring nutritionists or dieticians as well as the general public. However, I do have a few comments regarding the pyramid. I know that I am far from being an expert on food or nutrition but I feel that the numbers of servings on the pyramid are high, particularly for the bread, cereal, and grain group. This is only my opinion and I think that most people aren't active enough to burn all of the energy that would be consumed by the bread or carbohydrate group. I also feel that there could be a little more clarity on what the serving sizes actually are. When talking to people on this subject I see that lots of people are unaware of what serving sizes actually are. The pyramid in all other aspects is very useful.

Yours truly,

Tyner
10/1

Denise Tyner

NORAMARY HARSEY

ALEXANDRIA VA

RECEIVED
9/25/03
KT

September 17, 2003

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Dear Sir or Madam:

I would like to take the opportunity to write a letter about the Food Guide Pyramid. I think in today's society it is more important than ever to promote and live by the FGP. Our society as we know it has changed over the years, from home cooked meals and stay at home moms to eating on the go and two working parents. So, because of this reason, I believe it should be mandatory to have the FGP on all food labels. The result would make individuals more conscious and be constantly reminded of the foods one needs to eat and how much. Also, why is Tofu not listed on the Food Guide Pyramid? This is a complete protein, low in fat and has vital minerals, such as calcium and iron. Please take the time to review my letter, thank you.

Sincerely,

Noramary Harsey
Noramary Harsey
United States Navy

Harsey 10F1

RECEIVED
9/20/05

September 16, 2005

Amy Hodukanich

Arlington, VA

Hodukanich
1 of 1

To the Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team:

In response to the article published in the Washington Post on September 14, I'd like to share with you my views on the USDA's Food Guide Pyramid.

I think that the metaphor of a pyramid is a helpful visual for Americans to understand the components of healthy nutrition, but I have a few recommendations for integrating recent research. First, I think that the bottom layer of the pyramid, the cornerstone of a healthy diet, should emphasize whole grains rather than simply grains. Many Americans are unaware of the nutritional differences between white bread and wheat bread or white rice and long grain rice. Second, I think that fresh fruits and vegetables should be particularly recommended over other forms such as canned fruits and vegetables and jams that have large amounts of added sugar and salt. And finally, I think that lean meats, skinless poultry, and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids should specifically be recommended over hamburgers, bacon, fried chicken, and other artery-clogging protein sources. In addition, with the increase of vegetarianism in this country I think that America could benefit from an alternate food guide pyramid that excludes animal sources of protein and essential vitamins and minerals. Thank you for valuing the input of the public on this matter.

Sincerely,
Amy Hodukanich

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9/22/03

KT
September 16, 2003

To Whom It May Concern,

As a regular user of the Food Guide Pyramid as an educational tool to provide instruction to the average American population, I'm honored to share my views on this tool and give pertinent feedback as it relates to the population who is most likely suited to benefit from its content.

We all are aware that the morbidity and mortality of the people in this Diaspora is on the rise especially Americans. Unhealthy eating habits resulting from poor knowledge is the underlying problem that leads to many chronic illnesses that plague our society such as Diabetes, Chronic Heart Failure, cancers, and many more.

Most of the people that I encounter on my daily routine is quite aware of the Food Guide Pyramid and can easily relate to its use. What I find appalling is that the overwhelming majority of the people do not know how to properly put this tool to use to achieve its benefits. For instance, some people can tell you that most of their food choices can be derived from choosing food from the base of the pyramid, 6-11 servings but is unable to quantify what a serving of a typical food should entail. In addition, people knows that the top of this guide which is the Fats should be used sparingly but again do not know how to measure the amount of fat taken from the usual foods they consume or choose food with limited fat content.

Most people have a strong desire to follow this guide but eventually are turned off because they do not know how to use it to acquire its maximum benefits. Persons who have the luxury of visiting a dietitian or a nutritionist are most likely to benefit from this current guide. However not everyone has access to this service therefore the food guide Pyramid should be modify to serve as a guide to the general population.

To conclude, I will recommend the following to improve the use of the future food Guide Pyramid to the general population:

1. The food Guide Pyramid should include serving sizes and calorie content of food.
2. Fats that are important to our health should be emphasized and those that should be avoided should be high lighted.
3. Food Guide Pyramid for various calorie levels should be considered for the overall health of the population.

Sincerely,

Knellia Austin

Austin
10F1